

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 201450Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5678
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1007

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, LY, YE, YS, MU
SUBJECT: LIBYAN-YEMEN RELATIONS: PDRY INTERIOR MINISTER VISITS

1. SOUTH YEMEN INTERIOR MINISTER SALIH MUSLIH QASIM DE-
PARTED TRIPOLI JULY 17 FOLLOWING VISIT WHICH BEGAN JULY 6.
SALIH'S ARRIVAL IN TRIPOLI WAS ACCORDED MINIMUM OF FANFARE,
ALTHOUGH HE SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH KEY LIBYAN FIGURES, INCLUD-
ING QADHAFI, JALUD AND ARMED FORCES GENERAL COMMANDER JABIR.
OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED REASON FOR TRIP WAS TO "EXPLAIN" RE-
CENT EVENTS IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA, BUT SAIH OBVIOUSLY
CAME WITH MORE SUBSTANTIVE PURPOSE IN MIND. SOME ARAB AND
EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS HERE SUGGEST THAT SALIH TRIED TO
OBTAIN ADDITIONAL LIBYAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN EXCHANGE FOR
REJUVENATING POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF OMAN
(PFLO), AND IT IS PERHAPS NO COINCIDENCE THAT RADIO
TRIPOLI ALLEGED JULY 19 THAT IRANIAN REINFORCEMENTS
WERE BEING SENT TO OMAN TO "EXPLOIT" RECENT EVENTS IN
THE AREA. SAUDIS SPECULATE FURTHER THAT LIBYA IS NOT
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ONLY PRESSING ADEN TO REINVIGORATE PFLO ACTIVITIES BUT
TO PERMIT FORMER NORTH YEMENI COMMAND COUNCIL MEMBER
ABD AL-ALIM (NOW IN SOUTH YEMEN BUT CONTINUALLY RUMORED
EN ROUTE TO LIBYA) TO ACTIVELY USE HIS REMAINING INFLUENCE
IN THE YAR OFFICER CORPS TO SUBVERT THE NEW NORTH YEMEN
GOVERNMENT FROM WITHIN.

2. INITIALLY, LIBYA'S HANDLING OF BOTH GHASHMI'S ASSASSINATION AND SALIM RUBAY'TS EXECUTION WAS PERFUNCTORY AND LOW-KEYED. AS EVENTS DEVELOPED, PDRY'S APOLOGIA ON THE NECESSITY OF REMOVING FORMER PRESIDENT SALIM RUBAY'I WAS GIVEN FULL COVERAGE AS WAS ITS DENIAL OF TROOP CONCENTRATIONS ALONG ITS BORDERS WITH NORTH YEMEN AND SAUDI ARABIA. SANA'S PRESS RELEASES AND THE SUBSEQUENT ARAB LEAGUE DECISIONS WERE IGNORED.

3. MOREOVER, FOLLOWING SALIH'S ARRIVAL, RADIO TRIPOLI BROADCAST A JULY 10 COMMUNIQUE OF THE ARAB PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (A LARGELY LIBYAN-SPONSORED PROPAGANDA ORGAN WHICH ACCUSED "WORLD IMPERIALISM" OF PROVOKING QUOTE THE INSTABILITY IN THE SOUTH OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE ARAB GULF BY INCITING PUTSCH ACTIONS IN NORTH YEMEN AND BY ATTEMPTING A COUP AGAINST THE PROGRESSIVE REGIME IN SOUTH YEMEN. THE AIM OF IMPERIALISM IS TO SET OFF A BORDER WAR BETWEEN THE TWO NEIGHBORING PARTS OF THE YEMEN IN FAVOR OF THE INTERESTS OF IMPERIALISM AND ARAB REACTION (READ OMAN AND SAUDI ARABIA) UNQUOTE. THIS COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWS CONGRESS' JUNE 25 CALL FOR STRENGTHENING BOTH PDRY AND PFLO IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD THE ARAB NATURE OF THE GULF (TRIPOLI 0915 NOTAL).

4. THE YAR'S TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT APPEARS FROM THE START TO HAVE BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF LIBYAN LEANINGS AND
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YEMENI AMBASSADOR AHMAD AL-AZIB, RECENTLY STATED THAT WHILE FORMER PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN AL-ARASHI SENT LETTERS VIA PERSONAL ENVOYS OR RESIDENT AMBASSADORS TO ALL OF LIBYA'S NORTH AFRICAN NEIGHBORS, NO SIMILAR MESSAGE WAS DELIVERED TO QADHAFI. (IF TRUE, HE WAS THE ONLY ARAB LEADER NOT TO RECEIVE ONE.)

5. COMMENT. THERE IS LITTLE HARD EVIDENCE OF NEW LIBYAN PLOTS AND ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN ARABIA, AND LIBYA WILL BE ANXIOUS TO GAUGE HOW CLOSELY NORTH YEMEN'S NEW PRESIDENT WILL ALIGN HIS COUNTRY WITH SAUDI ARABIA. IN ANY EVENT, PDRY IS LIBYA'S STAUNCHEST ARAB ALLY AND QADHAFI -- WHILE PERHAPS REGRETTING THE COMPLETE ABSENCE OF ANY ISLAMIC TRAPPINGS IN ADEN'S DOMESTIC POLICIES -- CAN NEVERTHELESS BE EXPECTED TO ENCOURAGE (AND MAYBE ENTICE) ABD AL-FATAH ISMAIL TO SUPPORT A LESS CONCILIATORY FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS OMAN, SAUDI ARABIA AND NORTH YEMEN THAN WAS APPARENTLY FAVORED BY HIS FORMER COLLEAGUE, SALIM RUBAY'I ALI.
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